

Yes Or no?

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Category: How to Train Your Dragon

Genre: Romance

Language: English

Characters: Astrid, Hiccup

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2012-10-29 02:09:37

Updated: 2013-04-18 14:44:42

Packaged: 2016-04-26 14:01:20

Rating: T

Chapters: 5

Words: 14,655

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: Hiccup has been away for several years for "chief training" and comes now back. Does he like Astrid the same way he does before he left? Does she like him? And why is allways somebody interrupting? T to be save.

## 1. Chapter 1

The sun shone bright above Berk and a gentle breeze blew over the island when several seagulls started screeching to the ocean. The weather was much too mild for the summer days that normally happened here but Astrid didn't notice. She stood excited at the shore and eagerly watched the horizon. There, far, far away, a small dark dot had appeared and now approached slowly nearer and nearer, with direct course to where she was standing. Right above that dark dot another appeared, swirling and gliding in the sky above the other.

It wasn't long before Astrid could actually make out the big Viking ship with its huge sails and its impressive dragon head at the prow. With increasing heart she recognized the black thing in the air as one certain black, wide winged, long tailed dragon undoubtedly with the most incredible green eyes and the softest snout she ever had felt.

A moment later the black beast landed in front of her, immediately dashing towards the waiting girl, just to greet her jumping around and rubbing his snout at her hands. Overjoyed she embraced the overgrown pet just to get one of his gummy smiles. How long it has been since she had touched this little monster!

While cuddling the dragon she nearly missed the arriving of the ship right in front of her. Fortunately such a big ship couldn't land on a shore without making any sound. Astrid realized it just in time and let go from Toothless, who also turned around to watch the arrival of his human.

With pounding heart the girl stared at the ship as a plank was laid out as gangway. Here he came! Just a few more seconds and she would have him back. Her Hiccup! She nearly ran over.

Finally she couldn't bear it any longer. With grand strides she rushed to the ship, only to see the first person appearing at the higher end of the plank. Toothless jumped happily after her.

Her heart flipped when she saw the first glint of brown hair, a color she would recognize anywhere, no matter how long not seen.

When he stepped on the gangway a big smile spread over her face - the biggest grin within the last two years - just because of seeing him. Her heart was in her throat, beating even stronger when he suddenly turned and reached out for another hand from the ship. Seeing this Astrid's heart missed a beat.

With growing panic she saw him guiding a very pretty red haired girl, not much younger than herself along the way to the ground, making sure that she wouldn't fall. It was clearly visible that she was pregnant.

Astrid could only stand and stare. She couldn't move - not even breathing!

When Hiccup and the girl - woman! - reached the shore it was the first time he turned around to face the island - and the first time he saw her. The grin on his face grew even wider. "Astrid!"

Astrid gulped. She wanted to disappear instantly!

But Hiccup and the woman by his side, clinging to his arm, just came nearer and nearer till they stood right in front of her. His happy grin unbroken.

"Astrid, may I introduce you to my wife? We are going to have a baby in a few weeks."

That's when she passed out.

-:-

With a jolt she sat upright in her bed.

Panting she looked hysterically all around her dark room just to see a startled Stormfly hopping through the room and right to her human. Worried the dragon first checked her with a quick glance, then started to rub her head against Astrid's sweat bathed body, forcing her to react as sign that she was okay.

Still carried away by the nightmare she managed comfort Stormfly by patting her beak, even slung her arms around the dragon's head, hoping to regain her steadiness as fast as possible.

It was a dream.

It was just a very bad dream...

\* \* \*

><p><strong><strong>Hello and Welcome to my last crime scene.  
XD<strong>\*\*

\*\*My English is very poor, but i learned it's the idea that counts.  
;P So please don't be gentle but fair. \*\*

\*\*Yeah... what to say? Additional to my other obsessions a new one  
hit me. I started to read the "Overdose" here on and found two  
chapters, i wished to be longer or more detailed. \*\*

\*\*While I don't have somebody to bother to write a story for me, I  
had to do it myself... ã¶.ã¶ So here it is.\*\*

\*\*I really hope you like it. \*prays\*\*\*

\*\*akira\*\*

\*\*Next Part: Finally he's back.\*\*

## 2. Chapter 2

Anxious Astrid stood the next day at the docks, sending unsure  
glances over the horizon. The sun shone bright, like in her dream,  
but it was rather cold and a chilly wind blew constantly her blond  
bangs into her eyes. Right behind her a worried Stormfly watched her  
human eagerly, rubbing occasionally her snout against Astrids  
shoulder just to get a comforting stroke back like for assuring that  
the girl was okay.

Actually she had planed to glimpse now and then to the docks, to the  
ocean or over the horizon all over the day to not miss the ship that  
would bring Hiccup back home, but in the end she couldn't think of  
anything else. Again and again her mind traveled to the one day, two  
years ago, when they stood at the same place she stood now,  
surrounded by the whole village.

\_The "big strike", as they named it, with the dragon island and green  
death\_, \_was now over for a little while longer than a year. Live  
went on and it made no excuses for anybody of them. \_

\_So was Hiccup visible several inches taller than Astrid when he went  
to that foreign viking ship where Toothless already sat on. He had  
already hugged his over proud father and clapped on the shoulders of  
Fishlegs, the twins and Slognout, as every villager hat patted his'.  
â€" So now it was her turn. \_

\_With a shy smile he stood in front of Astrid clearly not knowing how  
to behave. She herself could just look back. No one got a word out.  
\_

\_Finally he took both her hands in his, started to rub nervous  
circles with his thumbs on their backs.\_

\_They weren't official a couple but nobody on the whole island  
doubted their common bond. \_

\_It was she who broke the silence: "So you're leaving." she stated  
emotionless, almost bored.\_

"\_Yap. Seems so." He nodded.\_

"\_And you wont be back for the next 2 years, hu?"\_

"\_Yes... I understood so..."\_

\_Suddenly she fetched her hands back just to dart forward to embrace him completely. Immediately his arms complied with hers. Her head buried in his crook of the neck.\_

"\_Please come back." here muffled voice sounded out of the embrace.\_

"\_I promise. I have to." \_

\_She let him loose but not go. Uncertainty was shown in her blue eyes when they locked with his green ones.\_

\_He smiled confidently. "We have unfinished businesses. You and me." With these words he leaned in to gave her an intensive kiss on the lips. \_

\_Then he turned right away and rushed with far strides onto the ship.\_

And now Astrid stood here again - scanning the ocean, looking for any sign.

The gently rubbing of his thumbs still tickled at her hands and the soft pressure of her lips kept stuck in her mind. It wasn't their first kiss. They had shared occasionally little peeks to the cheeks or anywhere else in the face but never that intensive...

For goddess sake, how old was she!? Embarrassed she span around, startling Stormfly with this abrupt move, as if she could get away from the memory by turning her back to it. Helpless anger swelled in her.

It wasn't even sure he would arrive today! The ship could be coming tomorrow or even only next week. Who knows!?

As if by command the thick storm bell from the observing tower began to ring excitedly. Suddenly the whole island seemed to listened attentively.

"SHIP IN SIGHT!"

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Hello again! :)</strong></p>

\*\*The second chap wasn't planed for today - not even with this content...

>But when I started to write it, I couldn't do else but take my time to finish the whole scene. The cheesiness totally carried me away! (sorry for that. ; - ; I vow improvement! Promised!) And then it was complete and nothing else would fit anymore. So I decided to post it right away...<br>What means Hiccups return will start next chap. (Definitively! Look, the ship is almost \*\*\*\*there! :D) I'm so sorry... v.v\*\*

**\*\*Nevertheless thank you very much for you nice reviews!**

**><strong>IreneMagicwielder\*\* thank you very much. :)**

**><strong>"no one"\*\* I will, don't be afraid! :)**

**><strong>SweetSearene \*\*thank you, that means a lot for me! - The formality was planned (because of the dream) but was it really that creepy? :C XD\*\***

**\*\*Okay!**

**>Read you!<br>akira\*\***

### 3. Chapter 3

Within minutes the seaside was overcrowded with what seemed to be the whole village - in the very first line the impressive figure of Stoick the Vast himself. Despite of the still rather far distance Hiccup could make out nearly every person and dragon of the island he was born and raised on. So stood next to his father his old mentor Gobber, waving like mad with his prosthesis arm - nearly beating Fishlegs next to him up, who desperately tried to avoid a blow. Right behind them sat Tuffnut and Snotlout on their dragons, overtowering everybody else - well, Snotlout sat on Hookfang. Tuffnut stood directly on top of the heads of Barf and Belch, one foot on each head, obviously posing like a king in front of his throne. No second later the left head, Barf, got annoyed and made such a quick move that Tuffnut suddenly was extremely busy not to fall down. Snotlout immediately started to laugh out loudly what him let lose the grip of his dragon himself and send him dangerously far down the long neck of Hookfang.

Hiccup had to laugh as well when he saw this. Apparently nothing had changed at all.

And yet everything seemed different... The boys were much taller " Fishlegs slightly bigger than twice as much from when he had seen him the last time. Even his father had clearly visible grey strands in his beard, he could tell still from the existing distance of the slowly arriving ship.

Where two years that much time to produce so many changes in his once so well known life? He turned around and took a glimpse of Toothless, who rested bored at the farther end of the ship. The black Night Fury was obvious taller than on their first journey. A few months after their arrival he had steadily grown up till he had the size to fill out a whole small fishing boat, one of these he could easily run around on before.

His pure presence reminding him of the life he had just left. Nothing would be like it has been.

With a jolt he turned back to face the island, just to see that it was not that far away anymore. He tried to compare every face, every spot, every grass stalk with everything he could recall from his mind when he suddenly discovered a certain blond girl at the second side of his father.

As if it would improve his eyes he took a step forward and leaned a

little bit over the railing just to have a better view.

Astrid! She was there!

Cold nervousness crawled up his spine till it reached his neck and let the smaller hairs there rise in goosebumps. His left hand reached automatically to his inner breast pocket just to check whether its content was still in there. In the meantime he didn't dare to remove his sight from her.

She was far more beautiful than she was before his leaving he had to admit - if this was ever possible. Even from the distance he could say her body hadn't lost anything from its strength and toughness, probably a result of regular training and continuously handling with dragons in the academy. Further more: Her body proportions were much clearer and more obvious than ever. She was no longer the girl he left two years ago. Well considered she wasn't even back then a girl anymore...

Astrid Hofferson definitively became a woman. Most probably the most beautiful one in Berk. And he was very certain that happened for sure in the most viking like way it ever could happen.

Hiccup failed to suppress a violent gulp. He couldn't deny that those thoughts made him tense...

â€

When the ship was moored and the plank became laid out Astrid couldn't suppress a nervous gulp. Her heart wasn't beating like mad, as it has been in her dream, but even she couldn't deny that her stomach flipped several times upside down in pure expectation. Burning hot tension rushed her spine down and spread that far in her abdomen, she prevented to become a little bit sweaty. Of course she wouldn't ever admit this.

Nevertheless she took involuntary a small step backwards so her shoulder nudged gently against the snout of Stormfly - the only emotional support she ever would allow in public. The whole time she couldn't tear her eyes from the spot where Hiccup had to appear in the next moment. As well as everybody else around her.

And there he was.

When the first strands of hazelnut brown hair came up on the other side of the plank followed by a big fat mass of black dragon, Astrid couldn't help but blink.

That was supposed to be Hiccup!?

A second time she took in the whole figure, watching carefully from head to feet and even checked the black monster in the background twice, but became not really more convinced of this idea. But seeing nobody else attempting to leave the ship it had to be him...!

She blinked again.

He was... tall... not to say huge, comparing to the guy who left two years ago. He must be towering her minimum by one and a half head! His upper body was sturdy, surrounded by broad shoulders and

obviously well trained arms. Despite the obvious visibility of his metal leg the lower range of his body was as sturdy as the rest. Even his hair he wore a little bit longer " not to say fluffy.

Astrid didn't know what to say. She was completely overwhelmed of this view.

Still standing on the plank Hiccup started to have a look over the crowd that awaited him there on the docks, but when he saw Astrid he couldn't avert his eyes. Instantly her blue sapphires eyes began to glow indescribably warm when his green emeralds met them with an unknown fire.

The very same minute Toothless decided to leave the ship. With his big paws he tried to step at the plank as well, just to cause heavy shaking so that Hiccup had to make a fast jump not to fall down. With a loud crackled sound the improvised gangway made a dangerous bow downwards when the dragon sat another paw in front of the first.

Like Hiccup the Night Fury had grown a big deal. According to his keeper the proportions didn't change that much, because the boy - MAN! Astrid really had to learn this! - still reached not higher than the dragons neck, but for everybody else Toothless appeared quite gigantic.

Astrids gazing became abrupt interrupted as said dragon suddenly toddled in his all known manner away from Hiccup over to herself and started to rub his snout lovingly against her cheek. Instantly she reached up to wrap her arms around his big neck, avoiding so to topple down by this enormous creature, but to greet this long gone friend.

That was the signal for the rest of the village to swoop down at once at poor Hiccup, all ahead Stoick, grabbing his son in a bone crashing embrace.

"

Then sun had allready set, when the excitment had calmed down a little bit and the whole party could get transferred into the Great Hall, where everybody was now celebrating hilariously.

Astrid couldn't stop feeling strange about the sudden attention for Hiccup and his journey, finally he was still the boy nobody could get along with some years ago...

Right in the beginning of the feast a proud Stoick the Vast announced once again the return of his one and only son - and his dragon - in one of his enthusiastic speeches to the whole village. Hiccup itself stood meanwhile a little bit off centred observing the spectacle wit attentive eyes and perfectly calm.

Knowing Chief Stoicks fulsome manners all to well Astrid decided to use the time of the announcement to bring Stormfly back to her stable and prepare her for the night. It was obvious that Hiccup was back. For that she didn't need any great words for convincing. And he wouldn't leave that fast again, right? But even this fact couldn't stop her mind of thinking about anything else than two certain emerald eyes...

So it wasn't that surprising that she went straight back to the Great Hall afterwards.

Back there she didn't even need to open the big doors to recognize that Stoick had ended his speech, because the immense sound of cheering and laughing vikings inside was unmistakeable.

Nevertheless she braced the big hall entrance open and let herself into the party.

Instantly somebody pushed a big mug of ale in her hand and animated her into a short dance. It wasn't that unusual so she took a sip and followed some steps just get easier deeper into the middle to have a better overview. Again she looked out for Hiccup.

But the more her gaze wandered around the more she was surprised to not spotting him directly. Was he already gone? She felt a little sting to her breast.

But then she realized the absence of Stoick and Gobber as well, not to mention a missing Snotface. So she became an idea where they could be. When she couldn't spot her father either, she got even more convinced, because now, it obviously had something to do with the guidance of the tribe. Or at least with the island. After all these men were kind of the leadership of their village besides the council of the elders and the Chief himself of course.

As to proof her musing right, she caught a quick movement in the corner of her eyes and saw no seconds later all lost men streaming out of a door of a smaller side room at the farther end of the Great Hall. Everyone was laughing in high spirits. Her father even shook Hiccup's hand. So it was something about their village.

When she came over she caught a sudden glance from Hiccup towards her direction, before he immediately turned away to talk his father. Completely confused by this Astrid nearly tripped over. How come!?

Making it barely to the small group her own father gripped vehemently for her shoulders, squeezed them exuberant and yelled in laughter "There is my pretty girl!" before he added even louder: "Now let's celebrate!"

.

\* \* \*

><p>.<strong><br>\*\*

\*\*Here I am, once again... \*sing\* XD\*\*

\*\*Hey there! \*\*

\*\*First of all: thank you, thank you, thank you very much for your nice reviews! I'm really moved! (is this really the right translation!? \*searching for a dictionary\* ?\_? )\*\*

\*\*I'm afraid of having made more mistakes this time, so, once again: please feel free, but please be fair. \*drop\*\*\*



**\*\*Soooo. It's much more this time... What do you think? Did you like it? Do you like Hiccup? XD\*\***

**\*\*I have to admit, the idea is not mine. Somebody called "Suarezart" made the most fantastic art of an older Hiccup I found so far â€" with a gigantic Toothless behind him â€" and I couldn't resist. I really love this picture. So if you should read this: Please don't be mad with me. It's really a great work and I absolutely appreciate it!\*\***

**\*\*Sorry for Astrids very short description. But seriously... What do you want to write about a girl like her without insulting her? :/\*\***

**SweetSearene\*\* well... what do you think? Is he? Or is he not? Å¶.Å¶\*\***

**Guest\*\* here here here here here here here here here here here here here here here here here here Just in case: here is more. XD\*\***

**JeremyVD\*\* well, read and see. ;)\*\***

**WisperArtemisMoon\*\* Thank you very much! And here you are! :)\*\***

**Farming 101 \*\* Thank you very much! Such reviews are really assuring. With this it's almost easier to write on. :)\*\***

**\*\*By the way: the planing for the mentioned second idea is ready too and will most probably become a story right after the last chapter of this one. Yey! XD  
><strong>**

**\*\*Okay! Read you!\*\***

**\*\*akira\*\***

#### 4. Chapter 4

The morning was long gone, when Astrid made her first step into the next day. Like having a big hangover of the previous evening the whole village seemed to start it's day a little bit later than usual. The few Vikings she saw just sneaked slowly out of their houses to begin their day with particularly easy work.

It wasn't that seldom a feast in the Great Hall got that excessive, so nobody could move the next morning, but this one has been really great. After all they were Vikings! Jamborees lay is their blood!

But even Astrid couldn't deny a little bit soreness this day.

After the strange cold start with Hiccup he suddenly warmed up and recovered their old intimacy, as if they never had been separated. He even danced with her and the crowd!

The thought of this made her snigger. He wasn't that shy anymore, but

to get him joining in his father practically had to shove him over.

Of course Fishlegs, Tuffnut and Snotlout weren't long in coming to make the reunion complete and after a long funny evening they all agreed to see each other at the next day at the Dragon Academy to catch up about the passed two years.

She, herself was now partway there, but beforehand she had to fetch some fish from the big storage. Normally her father cared for this kind of things but concerning her dragon she wanted to do them herself. Stormfly was her "pet", wasn't she? And it wasn't that big deal.

Well, apart from this enormous pannier she tried to heave over to her parents house. She had taken the biggest one she could find to have a small stock for the evening, but it turned out it was a too big one.

Frustrated she dragged the big thing over the ground, just to realize, that this wont work better than carrying it. If it wouldn't be that heavy! It wasn't even that far away for she already saw the roof of Stormfly's stable next to her parent's house, but she really couldn't lift it anymore.

While thinking how to get the pannier over she suddenly saw the door of said parental house open and nobody else but Hiccup and her father stepped over the threshold. With growing astonishment she watched the scene. What wanted Hiccup in her house?

She was even more flabbergasted when her father bade him goodbye with an amicably slap to his shoulder, what the young man answered with a big smile. Then her father got back into the house and Hiccup jumped down the small entrance step with enthusiasm.

The very same moment he saw her.

His smile grew even wider "if this was possible" and he hurried to rush over.

Astrid could just stood and stare. Both her hands hold the straps of the pannier, ready to drag or lift it further, when Hiccup arrived right in front of her.

"Good Morning, Mylady." \*

Astrids face nearly loosed its countenance, but she hold herself straight. Did he really remembered that old nickname?

"Morning..."

"I was just on the way to the Academy. May I help you?" He didn't even wait for an answer but grabbed instantly for the pannier and took the straps out of her hand. With a swift movement he swung it onto his back. She couldn't prevent her eyes from growing wide by surprise.

"'Uw... Thank you..."

He just brushed it with a smile and started directly for her house.

"Had your father forgotten to get the fish from the storage?"

Nearly too late she noticed, that Hiccup was already some steps ahead, when his question reached her ear.

Within two quick strides she was next to him. The same time she called herself to order. And see there, her mind started to think normal again. "No, this is for Stormfly. As long as she can't fly I have to feed her."

As awaited he looked up. "What happened?"

And Astrid started to explain: "Last week she came back from one of her usual flights and had red marks all over her wing. Right there, where the scales become to leather. These are no bite marks or something like this but a rash it isn't either. And every time she starts to fly it's becoming worse. So we had to bound her wings together to prevent her from flying. Otherwise nothing would hold her on earth..."

After the description she could clearly see, how he tried to resume whether he already saw something similar. Astrid felt immediately thankful. Every hint, what Stormfly got or how to fight it, was more than welcome. And Hiccup did now a great deal about dragons, didn't he?

So back in the stable he took a good look at the mentioned wounds after putting down the fish.

Stormfly greeted him briefly, but not that heartily like Toothless did with Astrid, and then instantly attacked her meal. She didn't even get deterred when Hiccup flapped her wings up and out to see the spots from both sides.

Astrid watched him attentive while caressing the Nadders head to keep her calm. But Stormfly stayed completely uninterested.

Even when he pushed with a finger tentatively into one of the obvious red wounds the dragon didn't react. As if she wouldn't feel it.

"Don't know, what it is... I really haven't seen something similar yet..." He rested his hand next to the spot and looked back to Astrid. "Are her eating habits unusual? Or does she behave anyhow strange?"

She just shook her head. "Nothing. Gobber checked for the same things several times, but couldn't find anything either. It's like somebody painted it there and now it's grooming... Sometimes I've got the feeling, she doesn't even feel it." She couldn't help but shrug.

He brushed a last time softly over one of the wounds when Stormfly suddenly tore free and attacked Hiccup with her spikes - sending them right past near past his head, releasing an angry squeal. Immediately Astrid caught her head back to rub a hand against her snout to calm her. For a short moment Hiccup stood there like a sheep under fire attack: completely shocked and with wide eyes, albeit the rest of

him seemed calm. He wasn't that nervous anymore Astrid noticed casually.

"Okay, that's new..." Careful he took a step away from the dragon. Stormfly however had returned to her fish as if nothing had happened.

In silent agreement the two of them left the stable quietly.

Outside Astrid instantly came over to have his head checked. "Are you okay!? Nothing got hurt?" Reflexive she raised to her toes to have a better view onto his higher face while putting each hand left and right of his jar, pushing it softly in every direction to examine it properly.

Astonished Hiccup noticed her worried face and the unusual state of nervousness.

He couldn't suppress a small blush having her that near after all the time.

Not letting her finish her check up he took a swift step backwards and caught both her hands in midair. "Um... Astrid, there is something I-" "Look at the love birdies!" a roaring mans voice bellowed over their heads accompanied by flight pitched laughter. Instantly Astrid and Hiccup separated awkward.

Embarrassed both looked up to see Snotlout cheering while circling small rounds not that far above their heads on Hookfangs back.

"Are you growing roots or what!?" he roared a last time teasingly before he directed his dragon to their Dragon Academy and flew off. Tuffnut chased right behind on his Zippleback, followed by a gleeful waving Fishlegs.

The couple on the earth shared a short look, where Hiccups face spread into a big smirk, his eyes sparkling, and they rushed off to the old arena.

Arriving there, the rest of the old gang had already settled down. Even Toothless sat in one corner. Despite the day before Astrid could see the saddle and a yet unfamiliar combination of foot bails and tail fan attached to his back.

Tuffnut tried to balance on the head of Barf, but again the Zippleback had his own intention and Belch immediately rushed over to grab his entire body, head first, with his big mouth. When the dragon spotted Hiccup at the entrance, both heads immediately came over to get a amicable rub at the snout. That Tuffnut was still clutched between Belchs teeth didn't seem to disturb the dragon much.

Seeing him that near Hiccup couldn't help to notice once more that the lean boy had several growth spurts as well. His slender figure didn't change much, but nevertheless his whole body seemed to be hard as steel, highlighted by some visible muscles. Proper dragon training he mused. The only changing to Tuffnuts old self was the plain blonde hair tied up to a pony tail at the back of his head, what suited him nevertheless.

Observing the whole situation Snotlout stood next to Hookfang with a

teeth flashing smirk, both arms crossed in front of his chest. It was obvious he had trained his body constantly over the last years. His upper body seemed to be made just of muscle and strength. A growth spurt of his own pulled him a little bit in length, so he didn't look compact, despite the uneven distribution. Even his face seemed to be more edged. But this could also depend on the slightly longer dark brown hair, that stood out of his helmet.

At least Fishlegs of all didn't change despite his size. The same compact form, the same nervous bearing and even the same rosy cheeks since ever. Well, his face lost its baby fat but was still unchanged sturdy.

"You will never learn how to control your dragon!" Snotlout roared, what Tuffnut, who was still in the same bitten up position, just retorted with a snarly grunt. "You can't with them like I do, you know!" Snot laughed on. "Look at me and Hookfang! We are the most gorgeous team ever! In air like on earth I can always count on my Nightmare. WE are the worst nightmare ever! Right?" looking for some support of said reptile he turned around just to discover only the end of his tail, becoming the long back of the red monster, according to Hookfang facing an other direction, observing intensely a butterfly fluttering around his head.

It wasn't just Hiccup, who had to suppress a grin.

At the same moment a heavy slump followed by a quiet wince came from Fishlegs corner. Meatloaf had decided to not wanting to stay any longer on her small paws, so she just leaned to her right side and tipped in one heap over. Unfortunately directly onto Fishlegs, who now struggled to get out from under his big Gronckle as careful as possible – obviously not wanting to disturb her – cooing her with all kinds of soft words.

Hiccup couldn't help but taking in the whole chaos and was happy about the so warm feeling of being back home, that had started to spread in his chest. Since Stormfly's stable he couldn't stop grinning either. He really had missed this.

Then Astrid spoke up to his left: "You see? Nothing had changed." She grinned. "They are the same idiots as ever."

Hiccup couldn't deny a agreeing nod. "Seems so. - By the way: Where is Ruffnut? Haven't seen her since my arrival."

"Married." This time Tuffnut answered, luckily escaped from Belch's sharp teeth. Freeing his helmet of dragon spit he continued: "A few months after you left, our parents settled a contract with a leader's son of a neighbour tribe. It's just a few flight hours away." He put a caressing hand onto Barf's head, who has sneaked up right next to him, just as if the dragon knew the conversation was about his second rider. Belch immediately followed and nudged his snout against Tuffnut's cheek from the other side. They looked suddenly rather sad.

"But her new tribe can't stand dragons. Despite the raids had stopped long time ago, they don't understand the new bond between dragons and humans. Luckily Ruff could have stopped them to search and hunt for dragons, but it's much too dangerous for her to keep one."

Instantly Hiccup could feel Toothless' heavy head onto his own, how he shoved his helmet aside and nudged him softly, like to make clear that Berk was still unique in it's development. Back on Thal, the Island Hiccup went to, they had some starter problems as well. There they already knew about the Big Green Affair, but it was still really hard. He could emphasize completely with Ruffnut and how she must be feeling over there.

"Nevertheless-" Tuffnut put his helmet back onto his head, "that doesn't bar her from wearing daily a terrible terror on her shoulders." He flashed a wide grin and Hiccup had to join. "Just a precaution, you know." Tuff chuckled. "Of course."

"So!" Hiccup clapped his hands enthusiastically. "Everybody in for a flight?"

But against his hopes they suddenly backed out.

"Can't," Fishlegs started, just escaped his trap under the Gronckle. "Meatloaf and me are expected in the storage. Harvest season's coming up and we need to rearrange the racks." "Me too." added Snotlout in a annoyed grunt. "Hookfang is the best fishing dragon of berk. They wont bring any haul in without us helping." "And the three of us have to help to repair the roof of the Great Hall. It became really leaky lately." Tuffnut finally sighed.

"Let's meet in the evening when everything is done." Snotlout punched lightly to Hiccups shoulder while toddling to the arena entrance. "Yeah, first we have to finish this." agreed Fishlegs while passing by. "See ya at the old watchtower." Tuffnut added with a tip to his helmet when the Zippleback strolled trough the entrance.

In the next moment Hiccup and Astrid stood alone in the arena. He obviously much confused about the sudden departure. Puzzled he looked over to her just to see the girl "no, it was 'woman' right now, wasn't it? - playing with Toothless. He flinched a little bit, when he realized, how fragile and tiny she looked next to the now outgrown black dragon. But he also couldn't suppress a smile as well.

Astrid appeared to be so different from her younger self and yet she behaved all the same. Of course she was grown a bit, like the others did too, and for sure her body had developed to one of a really handsome woman's "not to forget the most beautiful face he had ever seen " but the same time she didn't miss any of her natural gracefulness " not that he doubted it " as well as her whole attitude was much the same like ever before. Well, maybe she was a little bit calmer than as child, but this happened to the most adolescences. Hiccup was rather sure, once tickled out, her temperament didn't change in any way. Perhaps it even increased a little bit. He would gonna find out soon...

"Don't be disappointed. It's not their fault." Astrids apologizing voice let him snap back to reality. "They are actually the only young men on Berk. To young for a permanent task but old enough to do proper work. Them becoming bounded into the permanent tasks was expected. And they do rather good. All of them became really trustworthy lately." She smiled to him from her place next to Toothless.

Hiccup came over when he mused: "I think it's safe to say, that I can

wait for this involvement too, right?" "Most probably." She nodded. "With much more work than they got, for sure. But I was told you got a puppy license for the first week." "Oh really?" he got into it grinning. "What a lucky sheep I am." And the both of them had to laugh.

Then he swapped a look between Astrid and Toothless.

"So. What about you? Are you busy too or is there a chance for some flight company?" "You mean the two of us on Toothless?" She glanced to the dragon as if to ask whether it would be okay. Despite her expectation the black reptile didn't freak out with untamed excitement but watched her with curious eyes. As always the dragon had understood the whole conversation and so he folded the wing next to Astrid aside to lay open his long neck, where already Hiccup's saddle was put on as if to phrase an invitation.

"Why not?" she smiled back while gesturing Hiccup to climb up first. But this he refused. "Oh no, this wont work. You will have to sit in front of me, otherwise I have to be afraid of losing you. Toothless isn't that small anymore. He really speeds up, you know."

With this he offered a hand to help her up. Slightly surprised she took it and started to climb. Very fast she realized the differences. Without help she wouldn't even reach the saddle let alone the bails.

Eventually sitting save Astrid observed him following suite with obvious much more routine. Only then the situation sunk into her mind. While Hiccup settled down behind her, clicking in his metal foot and adjust something that looked like a girth, she noticed how much smaller she was now compared to him. When Toothless trudged out of the arena Hiccup leaned in, forcing his chest against her back, to grab the front of the saddle by wrapping his arm left and right around her, to steady their position. Automatically she did the same, although more to prevent the strange sensation of his chest against her shoulders. No moment to late, she decided, as Toothless lowered himself onto his back paws and then pushed high into the sky. Immediately she was glad to have something to hold on. Hiccup didn't understate, the dragon rose with breath taking speed.

Being forced back by the strength of past rushing air she hardened her grip at the saddle almost painfully, just to keep the small distance between her and Hiccup.

Then, suddenly, with one unexpected jolt, Toothless flapped out his wings, steadied himself onto a gust of wind and they were sailing calmly through the blue sky. Careful she opened her pressed shut eyes, not even aware of having closed them.

With wide eyes Astrid took in the offering landscape. Of course she knew every spot of Berk, but seeing it now was strangely different. She felt like having a deja vue and yet everything appeared so different.

Toothless started with big circles over the village. Throwing a glance behind she nearly jumped by the closeness of Hiccups face, but forgot this very fast when she saw the gleeful expression in his features. He was indeed happy to be back. So it was no wonder they took the grad tour.

Passing the Great Hall they saw Tuffnut waving from the highest spot. Waving back she had to giggle. This was nearly exaggerated peaceful, but that it was.

"What's so funny?" she heard his voice right over her head.

"Have you ever seen him waving?" she answered grinning and got immediately the same reaction of him.

"Look, there is Snotlout. Gods, he is really good!" Hiccup nodded to the docks, where his cousin and Hookfang were just pulling a fishing net in high speed through the water and out, where it appeared to be full of fish.

Toothless lowered his flight till they were sailing a short moment next to them. The pair onto his back greeted the Nightmare and his rider, while the dragon himself got a big fish flung over from out of the net. Happily he caught it in midair. Then they took off over the ocean.

Astrid couldn't do otherwise than notice how smoothly the Night Fury glided through the air. Of course his flying habits were much different to Stormflys, mostly depending on their unequal body structure. Compared to their last ride together Toothless swung much calmer through the sky, but with much more strength. It felt so easy she nearly forgot to hold on.

That was when she saw, that they moved away from Berk.

"Where are we going?"

"I want to show you something." he smiled back and they flew on. Over the ocean, into the sky, bursting through the clouds.

The higher they got the whiter the fluff surrounding them. Again Astrid couldn't suppress the urge to touch it.

With a growing smile she let flow the cold stuff first through one hand, eventually through both, completely overwhelmed by the sensitive feeling on her skin.

Finally she forgot her caution and leaned back. Instantly she felt Hiccups chest against her upper back, but this time she even snuggled in, making herself completely comfortable to enjoy the unique sensation. When Toothless suddenly struggled unforeseen through an air hole Hiccup hurried to embrace her with one hand to secure her from falling down. She didn't mind him not removing the arm afterwards.

That's how they flew on about several sea miles.

When some moments later a new island came in sight, Astrid began to wonder what he wanted to show her. She got even more puzzled, when she realized, that they were heading to that new piece of land.

But getting nearer all she could see were uneven formed cliffs covered with grasses. The whole island seemed just to be a big rock with caves and holes littered all over it. No tree could be seen for every possible space was filled with grass of all kinds and sizes.



When the wind blew over the cover the directed blades bowed in picture like shades of green. The howling even reached their ears.

She startled when he murmured softly next to her ear: "Close your eyes." His voice was not more than a rumble. She obeyed. "And now listen."

She could tell by the wind in her face that Toothless increased his speed again, and according to Hiccups shifting behind her, they seemed to change the direction. Nevertheless his hand around her stayed where it was, instead she could also feel how his chin rested on her shoulder. As he told her she concentrated on listening "and got absolutely astonished.

At first she heard just the blowing wind, but then some more holing and whistling got insert " most probably because of the blades and holes down there " mixing and mingled together in strange sound sequences, that finally become fine tunes. Astrid couldn't believe it. "Music?!" She tried to turn around to look into his laughing face, but by the way he hold her and the way they were snuggled into each other, she got not that far, so she turned back and closed her eyes again to listen.

It sounded like a whole orchestra of different instruments, all playing their own small melody. But with a few more wing strides of Toothless they became suddenly one strand of tunes and eventually got a full harmonic piece of music, like played from a sheet. Completely overwhelmed she listened excited, not believing this could be true.

But a pounding heart in her back and steady breathing next to her ear, connected with the warm dragon skin shifting under her, proved it to no dream.

When feeling Toothless gliding a new bend she couldn't resist. Her own hand, opposite the one holding her, sneaked up her stomach next to his, till their fingers entwined with each other. Her eyes were still closed. She felt absolute happy.

It was right then, when a strangely familiar scent reached her nose. Confused she finally looked around, just to discover a big field of small red and white flowers spread all over one side of the rocky island. Obviously they were gone further around the cliffs.

"Can we go down there?" she pointed out to the colorful spot. Hiccup didn't even finish nodding when his hand left hers to grip the saddle again leading the Night Fury down to land on the island.

While Hiccup quickly dismounted the dragon, she sucked in every detail of the unbelievable picture laying right in front of her. A whole field of Cyclamens, grooming wild and free. A spot of color on this hard and unfriendly island. Again she believed her dreaming.

When the saddle shifted lightly to the side Astrids head snapped back to where her companion had jumped down. One single Cyclamen was held in front of her nose, offered by a smiling Hiccup, who stood right next to her on the bail to reach an equal level. Astrid felt her cheeks blushing. Careful she took the flower from his hand, when her

eyes locked shyly with his.

And he decided to use the opportunity: "Astrid, I'd like to talk about something to you..." He stopped, obviously not knowing how to express himself. That was the moment the first rain drop splashed onto his nose.

Hiccup tried again: "You know, it has been a long time since..." Two more big drops hit his face, one directly into his eye, took him that much by surprise, he nearly lost his balance. Instantly Astrid grabbed for his tunic to pull him back, when the next drops hit down.

A short grunt from Toothless let both of them watch over, just to see him gesture to the sky. Simultaneous they glance up to clouds and where almost flabbergasted to discover how black they suddenly where. The whole time raindrops were continuously falling down till they became very fast much more than just a light spray.

Knowing that there was no place to shelter on this island Hiccup hurried to climb back behind Astrid and Toothless immediately took off. In neck breaking speed the dragon hurried forward, away from the cliffs, straight back to Berk, hoping to escape that sudden bad weather front. Toothless didn't like rain. No dragon does.

More and more water rained down on them and within shortest time their clothes were soaked completely. Astrid tried to hide a little bit under his wider body, but the rain pitched that unmerciful into her face and eyes, she neither could see nor hold properly onto the saddle, so she leaned forward to steady herself as well.

The flight seemed to need forever, but the Night Fury rushed the fastest he could.

Soon after Berk was in sight and nearly that fast they saw the villagers ran around like excited chickens. Everybody hurried to bring in animals and other stuff to avoid them getting soaked.

In silence agreement Toothless and Hiccup landed directly in front of Astrids house. With an iron like grip he heaved the young woman out of the saddle and helped her climbing down without leaving the dragon himself. She ran immediately over to the entrance, opened the door and jumped in. When she turned a last time to see them off, the two of them were already gone.

â€|

In spite of the first indication the rainy storm was over as fast as it had come and the sun soon sneaked out again trough the gray clouds.

Nobody seemed more happy about this than Astrid. Her heart pounded in excitement when she hurried a few hours later along the wooden way up to the watchtower. The black night already lay over Berk so she had no problems to spot the young men against the dancing fire over there. Their laughter even reached down to her â€" and she wasn't that near yet.

In fact she hadn't even started to walk up the way. Instead she stood at it's foot and terribly unsure about what to do...

After Hiccup and Toothless were gone, she had hurried in to change her clothes and dry herself, in avoidance of catching a cold, but the whole time her mind was only filled with the memory of the flight. She was really surprised to discover the single Cyclamen in her hand, completely unscathed. This was the moment, when the idea rose.

The realization needed much longer than expected, for her not being that familiar with these kind of things. But finally she made it. - And now she stood there. At the foot of the watchtower. In her most beautiful dress. The Cyclamen arranged artfully in her hair.

She felt so ridiculous, but the same time she wanted so desperately to do this " wanted to see Hiccups face, when he saw her. This gave her the strength for the first step.

The cheering of the four reached again down to her ear and the nearer she came the more she understood the conversation. Soon she realized that they really just talked about old times... Instantly she felt overdressed. Such a reunion probably wasn't the right surrounding for something like that. On the other hand... If anybody would even dare to laugh she would show them how the old times were still alive, got it?!

Carrying out her courage she finally reached the last steps before she would become visible to them, when Snotlout roared especially loud out: "I can't believe they were that stupid!" And all of them chuckled. Astrid stopped wary.

"Yeah, it's true!" Hiccup assured them. "They completely believed it! I needed 3 month to prove otherwise." And they laughed again.

Astrid just took a breath to screw up her courage again, when they suddenly became calmer. Again she flinched back.

It was Tuffnut who spoke next: "Aaaand? What about the ladies?" "Yeah what about them?" Snotlout doubled. When Hiccup chuckled meaningful Astrid froze. Anxious she strained her ears. Right in time when Hiccup answered: "Well, it wasn't like I had much time for this as I rose with the sun and went to bed at dawn... But some of them were really nice, I think." Astrids eyes went wide. Suddenly her dream forced itself back in her mind.

"But they weren't anything. Some were really pretty, I think, but not more..." Immediately the others interrupted him by calling him a coward and liar and booed him out till he recently started anew. "Yeah, okay! Is okay. I'm gonna tell ya! There was indeed one girl, that was really special..." Honored whistles interrupted him again. But he spoke on: "She was absolutely beautiful and her eyes really shone like the stars. We met every day and she became very fast very fond of Toothless so I-"

"Astrid?" Startled to death Astrid spun around with a hard pounding heart. Right in front of her stood Gobber with a small torch in his healthy hand. "Ah, good ta see ya! I may have some news 'bout your Stormfly." the old blacksmith beamed. This brought Astrids heart back to normal rate.

Her whole mind screamed to shove him away, to leave her alone, to let her listen to Hiccup! - but the upcoming adult in her told her to

behave as such and so she was friendly and listened dutiful to what he had to say:

"Hiccup earlier stopped by an' told me 'bout your incident in tha stable. How Stormfly jus' reacted when he brushed over it. That remind' me o' something o' my childhood, when I stumbled into a bunch o' thistles." Astrid's mind emerged in panic when Gobber started to tell his faithful meeting with mentioned thistles while the men above their heads suddenly erupted into a new wave of loud roaring. This not expected Gobber forgot instantly where he was and thankfully skipped the story. "Anyway, this stuff were glued ta me like... like glue, because they have these barbs, you know? Perhaps that's, what Stormfly got?" He gave her a moment to let the theory sink in. But Astrid was just listening intensely to the conversation right above them. Unfortunately the men became now rather quiet, despite Hiccup's telling, no one said anything.

Noticing Gobber's waiting face she hurried to snap back to the theme in question. "And what can I do if it is this?"

"Wash her. Give her a full bath! From head ta tail an' under tha scales. Perhaps ya'll find something ta pull out o' anything?"

To this Astrid just nodded absentminded. She desperately wanted Gobber to leave, to catch up the conversation of some steps higher. Why they had laughed that loud? And why that quietness right now?

Mercifully Gobber really bade her good bye a short moment later. Astrid was never that relieved to see him leaving. Then she instantly concentrated back onto the conversation of Hiccup and Co. when Fishlegs' voice suddenly burst out: "You want to marry!?"

This statement needed some moments to sink in. Her skipped a beat.

Ice cold fear crawled up her spine when Hiccup eventually answered with steady voice: "Yeah, well, I think so... The contract is settled, the Arrha\* is paid, so... We just need to charge a wedding date. - It's planned for this Freya's Day..."

Astrid just stood there, completely in shock.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Long, longer, but here it is! \*dead\*<strong>

\*\*I'm really sorry about the extended waiting time. On the other hand I'm completely afraid of delivering the most terrible english text, I probably ever wrote... \*wail\* Apologizes.\*\*

\*\*Yeah, nevertheless: What do you think of the story? Boring? Unexciting? Predictable? Please give me a hint. \*-\*\*\*

\*\*1\* As you can read, I'm referring to the whole (visual) "Dragons" Universe, including not just the movie but also the 3 short movies and the TV-series. That's why there is the Academy, the names of all dragons aaaaand Hiccup calling Astrid "Mylady". \*melt away\*\*\*

\*\*2\* According to my research it was possible to settle something

like a prepayment, for when the girl had more than one proposer. In german it was translated as "Arrha", so I used the word, because I haven't found an equal english translation. Here, in Hiccups case, it's not meant to rival somebody, more to ensure his intentions.  
\*\*

\*\*3. Gobber. I know it's weird and wrong and everything not belonging there, but I really wanted to have him talking in a different way " even when I don't have any clue how to write this. \*drop\* Apologizes again. The boys are to formal too, right? \*doubledrop\*\*\*

\*\*4. The Cyclamen. I know, a whole field is a rather unrealistic, but i need them for later. ;) \*\*

\_Guest\_\*\*: I hope the longer chap makes it up for the waiting time? ;)\*\*

\_Chowbo\_\*\*: Hey. Thank you for your honesty. I'm afraid, this chap isn't much better, right? ;\_ ; Normally I'm used to play with words and sentences, but my english isn't good enough to do so... I really hope, the story makes up for the strange grammar... \*\*

\*\*So long. Thanks for your attention. :)\*\*

\*\*Read you!\*\*

\*\*akira\*\*

## 5. Chapter 5

With much to much force Astrid pushed the pitchfork into the dunghill outside the stable next to her parents house. The sheep were already run away according to her rough attempts to clean out their little hut, but she couldn't help it.

She was fuming!

Since she had left the watchtower the day before, Hiccups words stuck in her head. Like an echo they walked round her mind, reminding her again and again, how embarrassing silly she had been!

Of course he was gonna get married " what did she expected!? Ow, she was so stupid!

To resist the urge to hit her palm against her forehead she stepped once again into the stable and threw a new fork full of dung out. That it flew much further than where the pile was heaped up she didn't even notice.

Dawn hadn't arrived yet when Astrid had decided to get up. It had been to early to call it even 'day', but she couldn't stand it any longer. The whole night she had just tossed around restlessly, her mind full of thoughts, overfilled with all kinds of strange feelings and uncomfortable lumps in her stomach.

She would have loved to go on a flight to get her head clear, but as long as Stormfly hadn't had her appointment with the washtub, she didn't dare to do anything that could increase that strange wounds. So she finally focused on her daily tasks, hoping to entangle the

chaos through all the work.

Unfortunately cleaning out the smoking house of her father, her mother's herb garden and the sheep stable didn't make anything better. Instead the rush of emotions got wilder than before.

She didn't even notice how she pushed the pitchfork into the fresh hay to throw it all over the empty stable floor.

Of course it had been this, he had tried to tell her all day. Now she understood, what he had meant with his so called "unfinished businesses".

The pure thought of the flight made her more furious than she had been before. Just because he couldn't open his mouth properly! Every time it becomes important he starts to stammer or was unable to express himself! No wonder they always misunderstood each other!

But she wasn't that better. Flung herself onto him like a desperate twelve-year-old. How could she have ever allowed this? What must Hiccup think of her!?

In fact the reunion had overwhelmed her completely. She had been so happy to see him again. And after all... it wasn't like he had given her any clear intentions, right?

With the invitation and the music... She forbade herself strictly to think of any bodily contacts they had made at this flight. He had just secured her to not fall down!

And that Cyclamen had been a simple friendly turn. What else would it have been? It wasn't like it had any special meaning - regarding flower language or his behavior, right? - Why doesn't she know this!? Her mother was so skilled with plants and strange attitudes of men â€" Why didn't she teach her yet!?

But if Hiccup just saw her as a friend, what was that difficult to just tell her about his engagement? They had been so close only a few years ago. They had been practically like brother and sister. Didn't he feel the same?

Or did he feel guilty? Was he afraid of telling her? Probably the latter... He had always been a little bit afraid of her, wasn't he? And she wasn't known for endless patience. So... depending on her behavior towards him... he must be really scared off!

One of the sheep dared to look out of his hideout and baaed in wonderment to Astrid, but when a fork full of fresh hay landed right in front of its nose it backed off immediately.

Astrid hadn't seen this. Instead she grabbed the fork tighter and aimed for new straw.

So, according to that, they were just friends.

Thinking back to before his departure they hadn't been ever more. Sure, there had been some calmer moments between them â€" not to mention some really rare peeks to each other â€" but considering the turn of things they obviously were only amicably.

They had always been just friends. According to their adventures they would always be. And she hadn't absolutely ever had expected anything more! Never!

"Astrid!?" The unexpected mans voice however startled her immensely.

Instantly she jolted around just to see her father with astonished face outside the fence.

"Morning." "Morning, my dear." He grinned happily over.

"What's the matter? Did you fall out of bed?" He gestured around over her done work, but she just shrugged. "Couldn't sleep."

This her father confirmed just with a grinning nod. "Exciting days, aren't they? Not much time for sleep left over, huh?"

"Yeah, something like that..." Astrid didn't even know what he tried to imply.

"If you feel like breakfast, go inside. Your mother prepared something. I'm off. Stoick wants a meeting about some new houses in our Village." He wagged significant with his eye brows and made a strange grin, that was almost leering.

Astrid could imagine what he was hinting to, but didn't go into it. Treating Hiccup only as friend doesn't include to endorse his marriage plans, right? So she just bade goodbye to him and he left with a slightly waving hand.

A short moment she looked after him, but focused immediately back to the stable, only to realize that she had already finished it. Well... As far as the crisscross spread hew could be called "finished"

With astonishment she looked around for her done work of the morning, but all she discovered was a great mess: While inside neat the outer walls of her fathers smoking house were spotted over and over with ash, obviously by her throwing it out unwary. The small garden of her mothers herbs was spotless - there were indeed no weeds or disturbing stones anywhere " but most of the plants hung down on broken rods or were completely trampled down, definitively caused by her boots. And over the small yard behind the house lay the dung all around because of her failing the hill.

She needed some time to realize that this was her doing of the last few hours. In her tantrum she hadn't even noticed that the sun already was out and over Berk, occasionally hidden behind some bigger gray clouds.

Like in judgment one of the slowly out coming sheep planted itself directly in front of her and baaed reproachfully, before it stamped angrily into the background of the hut. Flabbergasted Astrid gazed after it.

A deep blush of shame spreads itself over her cheeks.

With slouched shoulders she finally snatched a broom and began resigned to sweep the chaos together, strictly just concentrating on her work. She had cleared her mind and had archived an inner

agreement. No need to think any more about it! Hiccup was a friend and nothing else. She would treat him as such and nothing more. Finished. Further more: If her mother saw this mess, she would have much more problems than just this wedding.

It was the creaking of the stable fence that let her snap back to reality. In a fast movement she checked out the state of the yard "much better by now; she had even brushed over the ashy smoke house walls" before she looked up to her visitor.

Right that moment the sun peeked out behind one of these massive clouds and spread out her light over the Hoffersen house, playing Astrid's eyes a trick:

Leaning casually on his elbows onto the fence by folding out his full size Hiccup watched over to her with an immense smile on his face. She nearly believed to see a warm affectionated twinkle in his eyes, but when the clouds shadowed the sun again, it was gone and only a wide grin stayed left over. Astrid could feel a small sting in her breast. She denied it's existence immediately.

"Morning." he smiled. Her answered "Hey" came a little bit lame, but she really couldn't do more that moment. To overplay her frustration she occupied herself with the broom again.

"Er, |. hey... so, hi... eh..." Again he started to stammer. Hiccup was obviously confused due to her cool reaction, Astrid could nearly feel it, but she forced herself to pay no attention.

"How is Stormfly?" he finally managed. She had expected an other question. He too, that was sure. "I haven't checked on her yet, but I think there aren't any changes since yesterday. Gobber suggested to try a wash. Completely from beaker to tail tip. He thinks, the marks could be thistle barbs."

She saw how he thought this theory shortly through. "This could be possible... Depending on her behavior..."

They fell silent again.

Awkward Astrid observed him a short moment before she looked away handling her broom. She felt how Hiccups eyes lay unsure on her, but forced her view down. If he wanted something, he had to open his mouth. She wouldn't read it from his face.

Eventually he choke it out: "Where have you been yesterday evening? We waited for you..." He crooked his head shyly.

She had known that this question would be coming, so she was prepared: "In bed." She looked back up. This time with more confidence. "We were rather soaked after the rain and before I catch a cold, I thought, it would be better to stay warm at home than running around outside. I wasn't that well the last days." Not one word was true. And according to the new little stinging in her breast she felt the lie double on her conscience. But she felt like she had to do this.

"Oh...Well..." Hiccups expression was shortly crossed by some worried shadows when he watched her all over. "That's a pity. I really looked forward to see you again. It wasn't the old team without you, you



know? " He smiled this shy little smile of his again. Instantly Astrid turned her head down and nursed the little pile of dirt to her feet.

"Well yeah... Sorry. Maybe next time." She flashed a short fake smile to him. It stung again.

If he was dumbstruck, he didn't show it. Instead he raised from the fence to his full size with a new grin on his lips. "Yeah, I really hope so." Then he suddenly seemed to remember something: "Ah, listen, I actually wanted to ask you something different: Do you have some free time later? I want to show you something."

Now it was Astrid turn to look baffled. This she hadn't expected. For this she wasn't prepared.

But seeing the happy expectation in his eyes gave her just a new sting to her breast.

No.

He was just a friend. And she had to learn to tread him like such. That also includes cutting out extra attention.

So she denied: "I don't think so... I'm sorry." She didn't even become red from her lies.

"I still have a lot of work to do. Household and some extra tasks, you know." she gestured slightly around.

"My Mom was a little bit angry with me because I didn't do that much yesterday. So it would be better to finish this first before I go out again. Maybe later..." With every word she could see how his smile broke a little bit more. In the end it was just a strange grimace.

But Hiccup immediately recovered his old form: "Good... er, no problem. I... eh... will try later again. If you need some help, give me hint, okay?" Now his grin was back completely. With this he waved goodbye and a moment later he was gone again.

Sighing Astrid leaned heavily on her broom, not wanting to look after him.

"You know, I neither said anything about the household nor are there much tasks left over after you did all of them already." The voice of her mother from behind startled her that much, she accidentally dropped the broom. By looking over Astrid saw, how the woman scrutinized her all over, but with a cheeky grin in her eyes.

Her daughter instantly tried to back off. "Stormfly really needs this bath... And I haven't started the hen house yet..." "And according to your already done work, it would be best, you never would do so." interrupted her mother with an wide gesture around the yard and a wink.

Ashamed Astrids cheeks begun to burn again. It was so embarrassing.

But as the older Hoffersen implied, she flung the dirt next to her

feet onto the dung hill of the morning and put away the broom. Under the cheeky twinkling eyes of her mother she disappeared instantly in Stormflys stable.

She had just closed the door when she leaned ungainly against it. Only then the happenings sunk in.

Her mother hadn't rant at her... Further more: She had definitively seen every mistake and hadn't said anything about it... Slowly Astrid got stunned.

Normally her mother didn't even endured bad piled fire wood - not to mention any carelessness in the household. After all Astrid was a marriageable woman; she had to know how to do her tasks properly. Since two years her mother was worse than every dragon trainer at preparing her for a possibly soon coming up marriage. But today...

The sorrowful look out of yellow Nadder eyes broke her trance. Confused she looked back till she remembered where she was.

When Stormflys snout nudged her cheek lovingly she couldn't hold back anymore. She gave her dragon a desperate huge.

The girl didn't know were this came from, but when tears pricking in her eyes, she felt so absolutely helpless she had to hold anywhere.

Suddenly everything changed... Everything became so different, not to say foreign, within a breath. At a moments notice her whole known life had turned into a complete different direction - and the new situation now broke over her like a giant wave. She had no idea how to cope with it.

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Astrid didn't know how long she stood there and clung to the Nadders neck, but when Stormfly nudged her a little bit to the side, she realized, that it must have been a really long time. The blue dragon wasn't in for unmoved moments. Nevertheless she did everything to comfort her beloved female. One part of this was to gently rubbing away Astrids tears with her snout.

She hadn't even noticed them flowing down her face.

A short moment Astrid rested her forehead against Stormflys horn just to take a deep breath.

"We are invincible." she muttered for the last time before she faced her next task.

In a swift movement she freed the Nadders wings from its bounding. Then she armed herself with soap and the biggest washtub she could find.

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The first cool breezes reached her, when she just had finished her Nadders claws. Puffy gray clouds wereloomed over Berk's mountains and if she wasn't mistaken, she could hear far away a thunderstorm coming

over the sea.

With drawn together brows she checked for the merciless forecast above her, while she threw the brush into the washtub. Eagerly Stormfly spreads her wings and fanned them out as far as she could. Like sometimes in her owns Astrid could hear some bones pop back into space in the dragons back. Spontaneously she did the same. It felt good to get things back where they belonged to.

With big eyes Stormfly observed her in her Astrid noticed this the Nadder crooking her head and watching her longingly.

Her eyes shone like her scales now. The dragon had been cleaned so extensively, that the washing water was nearly black. Not to mention the uncounted stones, crusty mud rests and indeed thistles she had pulled out from everywhere.

Never she had seen her Nadder that neat. Some of the deep blue scales had even shiny colorful dots on it she never had seen before!

But the most pleasant discovery however was, that the angry red marks on Stormflys wings really became better and visibly started to relax slightly within shortest time.

Just to be safe, Astrid checked them again conscientious. Attentive the Naddereyed her.

With squealing joy the dragon saw her girls features lighting up and made immediately an asking gesture towards her saddle, hanging on it's place on the wall. The girl itself couldn't move as fast as she wished to, when she grabbed the leather seat and rushed back.

It wasn't even straight tightened, when she already jumped in, while Stormfly pushed open the stable doors. One heartbeat later they hit the sky.

--

When her dragon chased the biggest clouds of all, it was the first time Astrid felt like herself in days.

Berk was just a tiny spot anywhere at the horizon and the relieving feeling of knowing all her worries chained thereon for sure had spread comfortably trough her whole mind.

With closed eyes she stretched out her arms wide while sucking in the clear air all around her.

How she had missed this. The icy wind rushing by, the soft spray of cloudy water on her face, the infinity of the ocean... Seeing this she felt an unknown urge to lean backwards against something warm.

Suddenly an enormous thunderbolt erupted right next to her and Stormfly.

Astrid nearly lost her balanced. Baffled she looked in all directions, shocked to discover that she was trapped in the middle of the big storm clouds from the last day.

Clung to the reins she guided her dragon with harsh grip out of the sky. Stormfly gave an annoyed squeal when she realized, she was led back to Berk, but obeyed nevertheless. Instantly she increased her speed like Astrid told her with a short motion.

A new bolt flashed in front of them, accompanied with grumble of a stentorian thunder in the behind. Not one rain drop had reached them yet.

Astrid directed Stormfly down "as far away from the clouds as possible. Out here was nowhere a spot to hide for shelter. Like racing with her own heartbeat, they dove between the rocky cliffs on the backside of Berk, zigzagging that way back to their island, trying to vanish under rocky overhangings. For better maneuver Astrid crouch on the Nadders back to become the smallest she could.

When she suddenly heard only angry murmurs anywhere behind her, she knew they had escaped this sudden sea storm.

Instantly she relaxed.

This volatile weather around harvest season was well known among the dragon riders. But if you knew how to behave, it wasn't that dangerous. Furthermore it wasn't the first storm Astrid had flown in.

Rather more was she a little bit upset to be forced to end her flight so fast. However like to prove a point, a new thunder broke through the sky, this time a little bit nearer than before.

Yet it didn't bother Astrid anymore. Flying a close circle, Stormfly and her were already surrounding the big mountains of Berk and she nearly saw the house of her parents, while they flew low over the Great Hall.

There it was, when she heard it first: "NO!"

Confused she looked around. Due to the weather the area of the upper hills were deserted, so this was really strange.

She just convinced herself to have been mistaken, when she suddenly heard it again: An excited man's voice shouting from anywhere next to the Chieftain's House.

Before she even knew what she did, Astrid guided Stormfly into this direction, curious for what was going on there.

As she was near enough to see the gable, she could make out an odd construction of thick wood beams, directly attached to the backside of the house. Astrid hadn't seen this ever before and knows very well that it hadn't been there. Taken as a whole it looked like an addition, prepared to expand the building.

Flying past she spotted a certain giant black dragon jumping around on several of these beams, causing the whole construction dangerously to shake. Hiccup stood wild gesturing in the middle of this framework, shouting like mad to get his dragon back on earth again, but Toothless refused vehemently. Instead he did an extra flip and showed his wide grin.

That moment they heard it: A striking cracking noise sounded through the frame " so loud, it even reached Astrid's ear in the distance. Instantly she saw Hiccup froze. Then his gestures became much wilder. "NonononoNO! Toothless!" - But it was too late.

Like in slow motion she saw, how the brace under the black dragon broke apart. Several crossbars lost their hold and piece by piece the whole construction collapsed like a house of cards. One beam burst directly above Hiccup's head. Then it became black.

-:-

The first thing he felt was a nagging pain under his skull, the second a rather warm cushion under his head. Something comfortably cold dapped against his forehead.

At once he knew what had happened. The same moment a soft hand appeared onto his cheek, caressing it softly with its thumb. Purring he couldn't help snuggling into the warmth, knowing her smell all too well.

"Hiccup?"

His heart nearly broke when he heard the small voice above him. Nevertheless he didn't even try to suppress a smile. He crack opened one eye, only to see Astrid's worried face looming over him.

When she caught his gaze his grin grew only wider and he opened the second eye too. Without meaning to Astrid lost herself in his eyes again. For the next heartbeat everything was only green and blue.

Then suddenly her features changed from immensely concerned to slightly irritated.

"I was worried about you!" Astrid reproached at once.

"Yes, I know. Sorry." he apologized right away, but the cheeky grin didn't leave his face.

He laid flat out on his back behind the house of his father, his head carefully bedded in Astrid's lap, while she still cupped his cheek to hold him straight. All around them he knew the fallen down beams lying crisscross in the dust, while Toothless probably had vanished guiltily anywhere.

"Are you okay?" Astrid addressed him again. "Nothing hurt?" The same worried expression like on the previous day was back in her eyes.

"No I'm fine." Hiccup smiled with an implied head shake.

"Are you able to get up?"

"Yes, no worries. I'm okay."

As answer Astrid just nodded. "Then you better get up now. Before anybody sees us..."\* Hiccup mimicked the motion, but showed no attempt to do it. Instead he interlaced his fingers over his stomach and snuggled a little bit more in. "Really? It's very comfortable, you

know..." He couldn't suppress a new wide grin.

Immediately Astrid's cheeks became crimson red in shame. "Hiccup!" Clumsy she tried to shove him away and force him up, but she hadn't had enough strength to even move him. This he just commented with a blithe chuckle.

Finally he rose by himself, showing a big smirk. "Okay, okay, I'm up." he laughed. In a swift move he crossed his legs in tailor-fashion and settled right opposite her.

Now he looked directly at Astrid. She avoided his gaze stubbornly, still marked with red cheeks, so she decided to just watch at her. His grin slowly changed back to his usual tender smile.

"Anyway, what do you think of it?" he eventually asked.

Now Astrid turned her gaze, her eyes narrowed in slight curiosity. "What do you mean?"

This on the other hand seemed to confuse Hiccup immensely, because suddenly he started clumsily gesturing around, pointing everywhere and nowhere: "Well, this is here... everything... - The addition with the stable... for Toothless - you know...?" he stammered helplessly.

Involuntarily Astrid's view followed his hands, only to return finally on his face, with a forced casual knew exactly for what that new addition was planned for, but she had absolutely no intentions to broach a certain connected : What the hell was she even doing there!?

Hiccup most obviously struggled for words, when all at once an enormous lightning flashed right above their heads. Curious the two of them looked up simultaneously, accompanied by a fulminating thunder stroking through the air.

The storm clouds had reached Berk- that realization hailed down on them like the big rain drops, that set in no heartbeat later.

Only in the corner of her eyes Astrid saw how Hiccup jumped to his feet, when she already felt him grabbing for her hand and pulling her urgently to the backside of the chieftain's house. Here a small door was canopied with a small separate roofage, the planned passage to the new part.

Completely baffled she stared at the place she had sat just a moment before, then looked over to Hiccup who leaned right next to her against the wall.

Not knowing what to do best she did the same, observing the big drops that soaked slowly the whole surrounding. Only then she felt his warm hand still around her gaze trailed there.

Awkward Astrid tried to slip out of the connection, but his grip was too strong. Not knowing what to make of this she looked over, awaiting to see his profile, just to get instantly caught by his bright eyes again. She barely saw how he seemed somehow concerned, while he searched her face like determined to find anything particular.

"What is it?" she eventually asked.

He didn't answer directly. "You're so pale... You won't get a cold, would you...? Because of the rain and that?"

Astrid couldn't prevent her eyes going wide when the realization sunk in. This he was worrying about!? A strange fluttering scuttled through her stomach, letting her blush again.

"We need you healthy for this, you know?" He flashed a shy smile, but Astrid didn't see it anymore. This sentence stopped her dead.

Not even the mighty sound of the stormbells did reach her mind. Like in trance she saw how Hiccup suddenly flinched extremely and looked alarmed and in complete confusion, only to see Toothless, happily peeking around the house corner. He gave one of his big gummy smiles.

"She is here!?" Hiccup asked his dragon, and nevertheless he couldn't respond vocally. The Night Fury instantly nodded enthusiastically. Astrid didn't know what to do with this information.

Hiccup on the other hand got at once a big grin onto his face. His eyes sparkled in glee when he looked back to the still baffled girl next to him.

"She is here!" he repeated once again.

Astrid couldn't suppress a gulp. An unpleasant sense of foreboding forced its way into her mind. What did he mean with "she"?

Hiccup however was suddenly as excited as the already gone Toothless. In one quick move he turned to go, obviously ready to run right after his dragon.

He didn't even ask, as he clasped her hand tighter and indeed started to run around the corner. Astrid just stared at him completely overwhelmed. She didn't even have a chance to breast against his strength.

Stumbling after him like a dragged flour bag she finally recovered her voice: "Who is 'she'?" Hardly spoken she cursed herself for this question. Wasn't it obvious!?

And as if commanded Hiccup dragged her a little bit more, while he answered: "The second most important person of the whole event!" Not even the sun would have kept up with his grin yet.

They hadn't reached the docks yet when Astrid could already see an enormous ship right at the main landing pier. The same moment her inner self protection kicked in and she began to struggle. Her overwhelmment completely gone.

She would not meet this girl! Certainly not!

But Hiccup didn't even seem to notice her fighting. Unmerciful his hand held hers like iron and pulled her forward, till they reached the docks. She was entirely soaked before they stopped again.

Strong men were already busy to lay out planks to let the travelers

leave the ship, when Hiccup suddenly let go of her hand. Astrid instantly thought, he would run further when suddenly somebody appeared right in front of her.

At once her best friend rushed forward and hugged her in a bone breaking embrace. Astrid just stood there in shock.

"Ruffnut?" She didn't even know how she had said this.

Her counterpart however just snorted in amusement: "Of course it's Ruffnut! Who do you think I was!?" For this Astrid was powerless for word. Completely helpless she just embraced her back.

Why...? Astrid couldn't catch a straight thought.

Only one gloomy realization seeped slowly through her mind: One day there would be no change to back out. Then she would have to meet this girl. Sooner or later.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>UPDATE! <strong>

\*\*I beg your pardon! . But I couldn't let it be without the scene.  
\*\*

\*\*So I added it. \*\*

\*\*For those who already read it: So sorry! But it gnawed on me, chewed me off - I couldn't sleep the night.  
><strong>

\*\*For those who hadn't read it yet: Hey! Enjoy! XD\*\*

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Out! \*dead\* It's done! Somebody take me to the oxygen tent, please. . <strong>

\*\*I'm so sorry for the latency! \*\*

\*\*I started a new job in January and nearly everything doesn't flow anymoreâ€| \*wail\* :(\*\*

\*\*Furthermore I had really trouble to get this chapter written down. The first attempt was a stringing together of "and then and then and then and thenâ€|. " - This was so epic, I had absolutely to redo it. -.- Only to stuck at the end again. Originally I planned another scene for here, butâ€|. nope. \*\*

\*\*Nevertheless I'm really psyched about what you think of it. That's why I set the chapter online right now and read it over again tonight at home.  
><strong>

\*\*To the star: \* In Viking tradition it was custom, that, when a man puts his head into the lap of a girl, he claims her for himself. It wasn't like binding, but as I found out, they were really serious about this, because when a brother or father wasn't content with the proposer they seemed to have a real problem, when he did this to the



girl in public. On the other hand an unbounded girl, trying to persuade a promised man by doing this could really get in big trouble.  
><strong>

Ultimato The Great\*\* : is this accepted? ;) \*\*

xxA0lxxSNIPER \*\*: Long, but did! Thanks for the cheering!  
XD\*\*

parkles-and-Dirigible-Plums\*\* : This really calms me a little bit!  
\*curtsey \* Thanks for the appreciating! \*\*

gkz10\*\* : and it's getting better! (i hopeâ€|) You can't imagine like I'm as excited as you! XD\*\*

hollisterabercrombie98\*\* : This is really nice. Thank you.  
\*\_\*\*\*

Spyro the Dark Master\*\* : Pardon me? O\_o\*\*

bretney dumais \*\*: but you found words for writing a nice comment \*-\*  
Thank you! ^^\*\*

Ky \*\*: Here! \*serve\*\*\*

SweetSearene \*\*: Hihi, I like him too. ;) So: is he off or is he not?  
?\_? \*\*

xxA0lxxSNIPER \*\*: Here here here! ... I think this chapture will be much worse, but I hope you will forgive me again... Â°-Â°\*\*

Chowbo\*\* : This is good to read. Now i'm much more confident.  
^.\_\*\*

\*\*So. I will start immediately with the new chapter and we will read us!\*\*

\*\*Bye, akira\*\*

End  
file.